

# POSTAL NEWS

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Published November 21 2010

## **1. RESCO employee earns mail specialist certification**

Jeremy King, an estimator and client services specialist at RESCO, recently earned certification as a quality mail preparation specialist.

King earned the two-year certification by attending a program at the Printing Industry of Minnesota offices in Roseville, Minn.

The course was organized and delivered through PIM the Mailing and Fulfillment Services Association. It was taught by George Heinrich of Denver, whose industry nickname is "the postal professor."

The coursework included recognition of postal rules and regulations, knowledge of quality mail piece design, understanding how the U.S. Postal Service processes and delivers mail, understanding mail discounts and delivery options, and identifying problem identification.

Attendees also learned classes of mail, shape-based processing, barcodes and automation, and about non-automation mailings.

"It's very beneficial for businesses that use RESCO as a resource for direct mail to have someone like Jeremy on staff," said RESCO President John Knutson. "The sheer number and complexity of postal rules and regulations is tough for everyone to know, so it's great that Jeremy now has the training and resources to help our clients manage their direct mail efficiently and help save them money in the process."

RESCO, located at 1450 Heggen Street in Hudson, is a marketing and sales services organization that specializes in extending the client's reach through lead generation, branding, production services, and warehousing and fulfillment.

More information about the company is available online at [www.rescocompany.com](http://www.rescocompany.com) or by e-mailing Knutson at [jknutson@rescocompany.com](mailto:jknutson@rescocompany.com).

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## **2. Plenty of good things about postal system**

Kathleen Pagani Ledyard

Publication: The Day

Published 11/21/2010 12:00 AM

This is in response to the letter to the editor titled "Post office can trim fat by cutting junk mail," published Nov. 17.

So-called junk mail helps pay the way for the postal service, just as advertising helps the bottom line of newspapers, magazines and even on Web.

The so-called vanity stamps the letter writer refers to are actually called commemoratives, and the fact that people collect them is a good thing. People pay for a service by purchasing a stamp to mail something, but then by keeping the stamp unused don't take advantage of the service.

These commemoratives are also an excellent way for people to learn about history and to appreciate art.

As for becoming a package delivery service, the postal service already does that. In many areas UPS delivers parcels to the post office for final delivery.

And, where else can we get door-to-door delivery of a hard copy of a letter anywhere in the country for only 44 cents?

As much as I, someone well over age 40, may use the Internet and e-mail, there is nothing that takes the place of an old yellowed letter in a loved one's handwriting, to be kept and treasured, read and reread and passed down to our children or for history.

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## **3. Letters: Postal study jeopardizes facility**

November 21, 2010

Be forewarned that what you take for granted will undergo drastic changes if there isn't some public outcry.

Not only is our mail service going to drastically deteriorate; the costs to our schools, churches, charities and other non-profits are going to increase because they will have to get their mailing permits from Green Bay thereby reducing the value of the hard-to-come-by donations we give them in this tight economy. We have the capacity and personnel to handle the additional mail if Green Bay sorting operations would close instead of us. We do not, would not have to lease or build additional facility space to handle additional volume, whereas they are too small and would have to spend money to obtain additional physical space.

A "study" as the USPS is doing now was done a few years ago and indicated Green Bay's mail should move here for processing instead of the other way around. Someone, somehow, stopped that study in its tracks. Who and why?

There is an informational meeting at UW-Oshkosh Reeve Union on Tuesday Nov. 23, from 7 to 9 p.m. Come and tell them you don't want to lose your mail service.

Jo Helf

Retired postal employee

Oshkosh

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#### **4. Korea's first modern postal service started in 1884**

The Korean Postal Bureau (Woojongchongguk), which started the nation's first modern postal service in 1884, is located in Gyeonji-dong, Jung-gu, central Seoul. The building is also famous for having been the site of the so-called "Gapshin coup." / Korea Times file

By Robert Neff

Following its opening to the West in 1882, one of Korea's first modernization attempts was the postal service. On April 22, 1884, the Korean Postal Bureau was established when Hong Yong-sik was appointed the Post Master General.

Beginning in June, Hong hired at least four former Japanese postal employees to act as advisors and assist setting up Korea's postal system. These Japanese experts were guaranteed travel expenses, Sundays off, paid summer vacations and very lucrative salaries — the senior advisor, Obi Sukeaki, received \$130 a month.

There were Westerners as well, but their role in Korea's postal system was minimal. Korea's first Western advisor, Paul Georg von Mollendorff, a German, is often credited for having helped establish Korea's postal service but in truth he appears to have taken very little, if any, direct involvement in its creation. The only real influence on the postal service he had appears to have been through the Korean Customs Department which he established. The Korean Customs Service was responsible for paying the wages of the postal employees and, Joseph Haas, an Austrian who served as the Commissioner of the Korean Customs Service in Seoul, negotiated the contract for Korea's first postage stamps.

Korea's first stamps were printed in Japan and were of five denominations: 5, 10, 25, 50 and 100 "mun." Nearly 2,800,000 stamps were ordered by the Korean government

but only 15,000 stamps (5 and 10 mun denominations) had arrived when the first post offices were opened on Nov. 18, 1884 at Chemulpo and Seoul.

It is unclear how many Korean mailmen were employed or how much mail they carried. We do know that the initial mail pickup within Seoul was completed by 10 a.m. and then forwarded to Jemulpo and that an additional collection was made in the afternoon. We also don't know who the customers were. Most of the early post office records were destroyed and no covers (postally used envelopes or postcards) with Korean stamps from this period still exist. Judging from the number of surviving cancelled stamps they were most likely Westerners residing in Jemulpo or the foreign legations in Seoul. They were most assuredly not the average Korean citizens.

According to the Korean postal regulations, letters mailed within Seoul and Jemulpo and weighing less than an eighth of an ounce cost 5 mun and those mailed between the two cities were 10 mun with an additional 10 mun added for every eighth of an ounce. This was fairly expensive when one considers that sending a package weighing an ounce, using first class postage, within the United States costs only 4 cents. A similar package mailed from Seoul to Chemulpo (only 26 miles away) would have cost 80 mun, or 8-10 cents (depending on the source, one dollar was worth 800-1,000 mun). An average American factory worker earned 5-20 cents an hour whereas a Korean laborer was lucky to make 20 cents a day.

On the evening of Dec. 4, 1884, a banquet was held at the post office in Seoul to celebrate the successful inauguration of Korea's postal system. Ironically, it was this celebration that helped doom Korea's postal system as well as other early modernizations.

Members of the diplomatic community and Korean government officials, including Mollendorff, were in attendance. Few of the Westerners were aware that this party was part of an elaborate plot to overthrow the pro-Chinese Korean court, dominated by the Min clan, and establish a new court that would be more progressive and pro-Japanese. Chief amongst the conspirators in attendance were Hong Yong-sik, the host of the party and leader of the conspiracy; Pak Yong-hyo, the conspiracy's director of operations; and Kim Ok-kuin who was responsible for contact between the conspirators and the Japanese legation and planning the coup. In addition to the conspirators were their foes, three conservative Korean ministers: Prince Min Yong-ik, head of the pro-Chinese Min clan; Yi Cha-yon and General Han Kyu-sik.

Just before 10 p.m., a small building near the post office was set afire luring Min Yong-ik out into an ambush. An assassin severely wounded him but he managed, bleeding profusely, to stagger back into the building. By the end of the night the conspirators had gained a tentative control of the Korean government.

Despite the great confusion and excitement that filled the streets of Seoul, work went on as usual at the post office in Seoul until the afternoon of Dec. 6. Alarmed at the increasing number of Chinese soldiers in the streets and rumors of battle at the palace, the postal employees, Korean and Japanese, abandoned the post office. Over the next couple of days the post office buildings were ransacked and, except for the main hall, were burned by angry mobs of Koreans.

The ill-fated “Gapsin” Coup lasted a mere three days but its toll was heavy. Many of the conservatives and their foes, the reformers, including Hong Yong-sik died in the fighting or were later executed. Not only was the postal service destroyed and discontinued but so too were Seoul’s first newspaper — the Hanseong Sunbo — and the three photograph studios in the capital — all vilified as Western modernizations and pro-Japanese.

The destruction caused by the Gapsin Coup did prove beneficial to Ensign George C. Foulk, an American naval officer attached to the American legation in Seoul, and stamp collectors around the world.

When Korea declared its intention to establish its own postal system, stamp collectors around the world took interest in these “very artistic stamps.” As mentioned earlier, only about 15,000 stamps were in Korea, and out of that number only about 500 were sold and used. What became of the remainder? An examination of Foulk’s personal correspondences provides us with a clue.

On Dec. 20, 1884, he wrote:

“I enclose you four postage stamps of the late destroyed Korean Post Office. Let Ed take them to Scott’s Stamp Store on Broadway and try to sell them. But he must not sell them if he cannot get at least \$30 apiece for them, and he ought to strike higher than that even; perhaps \$30 for each stamp. Such stamps will never again be issued, and never were good out of Korea; were for use in Seoul and from there to Chemulpo. There are very few in existence. Only two kinds were issued, 5 and 10 pun (or mun) respectively; that is ½ cent and 1 cent about, in English money....Hong was the head of the Korean Post Office system. It had only been in existence a few days when this trouble broke out in Seoul. Hong was murdered, the office gutted, and now comes a royal edict that the Post Office is utterly abolished. The stamps certainly ought to be very valuable to the “friends,” and you must not let them go for any sacrifice.”

But those were not the only stamps. In July 1885, he acquired another 15,000 stamps that he “bought for \$3.00 from a wretch who could give no account of how he got them. I meant to return them to the Korean government if it opened a new Post Office, but since then I have learned it will have an entire issue of new stamps if an office is opened, and ignores the old and first issue as the handiwork of the conspirators. Under the circumstances I am going to pocket the pool.”

Foulk was not the only one to see the potential profit to be made. In early 1885, the final shipment of 1,300,000 stamps (25, 50 and 100 mun) previously ordered from Japan arrived. The Korean government, much to its annoyance, was forced to pay for these unwanted stamps. In an effort to recoup its money, the Korean government sold the stamps to E. Meyers & Co., a German trading firm in Chemulpo, in early 1886. Apparently not all the stamps were sold to the company as evidenced by Foulk’s letter to his family in March 1886:

“These are of a lot which arrived in Korea after the Post Office was destroyed and abolished. That is they have never been in postal use in Korea. They complete the issue originally intended by this defunct P.O. The whole lot of stamps, 1,300,000, has

been bought by a German firm for \$500. They will make a speck or two out of the postage stamp cranks.”

E. Meyer & Co., did “make a speck or two” but they weren’t the only ones. The Korean government also made a small profit. The entire cost of manufacturing and transporting the 2,800,000 stamps was only about \$390.

It wasn’t until 1895 that Korea again established a domestic postal system. This was followed by an international mail service in 1900. Unlike the initial postal system of the Joseon period, South Korea’s modern postal service is very inexpensive (domestic rates are nearly half that of the United States) and has nearly 43,000 full time employees (2007). Korea’s initial failure is now an enviable success.

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Posted at 11:20 AM ET, 11/21/2010

#### **5. Postal Service fails to reach agreements with unions**

By Ed O'Keefe

The U.S. Postal Service failed to reach new agreements with two of its largest labor unions Saturday, agreeing to continue negotiations with one while reaching an impasse with the other.

The Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union agreed to keep talking until noon Tuesday. But talks with the National Rural Letter Carriers Association ended in an impasse Saturday afternoon, the union said.

"Should APWU negotiations fail as they have with the NRLCA, a process begins which could result in a third party determining contract terms and work rules for more than 324,000 employees whose wages and benefits exceeded \$20 billion last year," the Postal Service said in a statement e-mailed early Sunday.

"There is still potential to negotiate an agreement," APWU President Cliff Guffey said Sunday. The union represents 220,000 postal clerks, mechanics, drivers, custodians and some administrative workers.

"Throughout the collective bargaining process, the APWU has sought to protect our members' jobs and to strengthen the Postal Service. Every proposal we have made to preserve jobs for our members will also benefit the USPS, because APWU members can perform the work more efficiently and less expensively than subcontractors," Guffey said.

NRLCA represents more than 100,000 rural letter carriers. In a statement, the union said the Postal Service had proposed "wage freezes and significant benefit cuts for current career employees, including the abolishment of cost-of-living adjustments and a new salary schedule with a lower wage scale for new hires." The Postal Service also

sought to eliminate a no-layoff clause for all but the most senior NRLCA workers, the union said.

The Postal Service did not respond to requests for further comment. Postal negotiators said in September that they would seek concessions from the union on wages, health benefits and working conditions as it tried to pare down full-time workforce and expand the use of part-timers. With mail volume continuing to drop from its highs in 2006, the Postal Service can no longer guarantee eight-hour shifts for clerks, mail handlers and other workers, it said when negotiations began.

By law postal workers are not permitted to strike and workers represented by the two unions will continue working under their old agreements until new deals are struck.

The stalled negotiations come at a critical time for the Postal Service, which lost \$8.5 billion during the fiscal year that ended in September. Postmaster General John E. Potter is set to step down next week, leading some union leaders to worry privately about the future of labor negotiations.

By Ed O'Keefe | November 21, 2010; 11:20 AM ET

Categories: Postal Service

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